

Message Text

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SUBJECT: PAN AMERICAN-AEROFLOT DISCUSSIONS ON POSSIBLE FUTURE
EXPANSION OF BILATERAL AIR SERVICES

1. SUMMARY: DURING APRIL 2 CALL ON AMBASSADOR VISITING PAN AMERICAN REPS STATED THAT APRIL 1-2 DISCUSSIONS WITH AEROFLOT AND MINISTRY CIVIL AVIATION (MCA) OFFICIALS ON FLIGHT FREQUENCIES FOR 1976 AND FUTURE YEARS RESULTED IN GENERAL UNDERSTANDING THAT PAN AM WOULD AGREE TO INCREASE BY BOTH CARRIERS TO FIVE FLIGHTS WEEKLY IN SUMMER AND THREE WEEKLY IN WINTER BEGINNING IN 1976 IN EXCHANGE FOR SOVIET AGREEMENT TO INTRODUCE WIDE-BODIED AIRCRAFT INTO BILATERAL SERVICES IN 1977. END SUMMARY.

2. ON APRIL SECOND PAN AMERICAN VICE PRESIDENTS HENRY P. HILL (SCHEDULING), AND S. MAGARY (ECONOMIC PLANNING), TOGETHER WITH ROBER S. DISTLER (DIRECTOR, ADVANCE PLANNING), AND ACCOMPANIED BY PAN AMERICAN REP TONY DRAHORAD, PROVIDED AMBASSADOR WITH MAIN POINTS THEIR TWO-DAY DISCUSSIONS WITH SOVIETS ON EXPANSION OF AIR SERVICES. TALKS WITH AEROFLOT AND MCA OFFICIALS CENTERED ON QUESTION OF FLIGHT FREQUENCIES FOR SUMMER 1976 AND THEREAFTER. WHILE SOVIETS PRESSED FOR EXPANSION OF FREQUENCIES TO FIVE PER WEEK DURING SUMMER AND THREE PER WEEK IN WINTER, PAN AM POSITION WAS THAT MOST FEASIBLE EXPANSION OF SERVICES WOULD BE INTRODUCTION OF WIDE-BODIED AIRCRAFT FOR PEAK WEEKEND PERIOD TRAFFIC WITH
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NO INCREASE IN NUMBER OF FLIGHTS.

3. MINISTRY CIVIL AVIATION FOREIGN RELATIONS CHIEF S.S. PAVLOV REPORTEDLY STATED DURING TALKS THAT LACK OF SUFFICIENT FOREIGN CURRENCY WAS DELAYING SOVIET ACQUISITION OF WIDE-BODIED AIRCRAFT. PAN AM REPS EXPRESSED GENERAL WILLINGNESS OFFER SOVIETS LEASE OF SUCH AIRCRAFT TO EASE TRANSITION PROBLEMS SUCH AS CREW TRAINING, SPARE ENGINE AND PARTS SUPPLY, AND MAINTENANCE. AEROFLOT OFFICIAL TIKHONOV ALSO INFORMED PAN AM REPS THAT AEROFLOT'S MAIN CONCERN IN SEEKING FURTHER FREQUENCY INCREASE BEGINNING SUMMER 1976 IS TO MEET PLANNED TARGET FOR FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNINGS.

4. PAN AM REPS FURTHER STATED THAT GENERAL UNDERSTANDING REACHED WITH SOVIETS WAS THAT PAN AM AGREEABLE TO FREQUENCY INCREASE FOR SUMMER 1976 IN EXCHANGE FOR SOVIET AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE TO INTRODUCE WIDE-BODIED AIRCRAFT BY SUMMER 1977. ACCORDING TO HILL, PAN AM INTENDS SEND LETTER TO SOVIETS WITHIN NEXT FEW WEEKS OUTLINING POSITION. PAN AM REQUIRES GENERAL AGREEMENT WITH SOVIETS BY JUNE OR JULY FOR INCLUSION IN AIRLINE'S 1976 OPERATIONS PLAN. (COMMENT: OBVIOUSLY INTER-GOVERNMENTAL APPROVAL ALSO REQUIRED. THIS WOULD PRESUMABLY BE ONE CHIEF AREA FOR DISCUSSION AT FALL 1975 TALKS WITH USG REPS WHICH MCA HAS PROPOSED. END COMMENT)

5. ON OTHER SUBJECTS, PAN AM REPS SAID SOVIETS INQUIRED ABOUT PAN AM'S BEHIND-THE-GATEWAY SERVICE TO CHICAGO AND WERE TOLD THAT PAN AM GETTING VERY FEW PASSENGERS FROM THAT CITY. CHICAGO SERVICE INTRODUCED BY PAN AM, ACCORDING HILL, PRIMARILY TO SERVE LARGE NUMBER OF POLISH-AMERICANS TRAVELING TO WARSAW, AND ONCE WEEKLY FLIGHT TO MOSCOW ONLY INCIDENTAL FACTOR. HILL CONFIRMED PAN AM'S INTENTION TO INCREASE FLIGHTS TO FOUR PER WEEK STARTING MAY 22.

6. COMMENT: PAN AM OFFICIALS IMPRESSED BY SOVIET HOSPITALITY AND INFORMALITY DURING DISCUSSIONS, WHICH THEY ATTRIBUTED TO COMMON BACKGROUND AND INTERESTS OF "AIRLINE PEOPLE." HILL CONTRASTED SOVIE APPROACH THIS INSTANCE WITH EARLIER TALKS IN WHICH PAN AM OFFICIALS WERE GIVEN MORE FORMAL TREATMENT BY SOVIETS. WITH REGARD TO QUESTION OF AEROFLOT ACQUISITION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF WIDE-BODIED AIRCRAFT, EMBASSY ASSUMES THAT PAN AM HAS GENERAL KNOWLEDGE OF CONTINUING DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN SOVIET AND US AIRCRAFT MANUFACTURERS ON THIS MATTER. STOESEL

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